

## Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 VO-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9894  
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA  
USMISSION GENEVA  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 24340

EO 11652: NA  
TAGS: REF  
SUBJ: HIGH LAND REFUGEE ARRIVAL RATES IN THAILAND

REF: BANGKOK 23266 (REPEAT OF UDORN 171).

1. SUMMARY: LAND REFUGEES CONTINUE TO ARRIVE IN THAILAND AT A HIGH RATE. WHILE EXACT STATISTICS ARE ELUSIVE, WE AND THE UNHCR ESTIMATE THAT FOR THE LAST THREE MONTHS, THE ARRIVAL RATE FOR LAND REFUGEES HAS EXCEEDED 2500 AND THE JULY RATE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN AT LEAST 3000. ALTHOUGH OFFICIAL STATISTICS HAVE NOT YET CAUGHT UP, TWO CAMPS FOR LAO REFUGEES, UBON AND NONGKHAI, NOW HAVE TOPPED THE 30,000 MARK. LAND ARRIVAL RATES CONTINUE TO EXCEED OUTFLOW TO THIRD COUNTRIES. IN ADDITION TO THOSE REFUGEES IN UNHCR CAMPS, WE ESTIMATE THAT THE TOTAL POPULATION OF ILLEGAL, OUT-OF-CAMP REFUGEES IS NOW 30,000 TO 35,000. REFUGEES FROM LAOS WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO ARRIVE IN THAILAND IN RELATIVELY HEAVY NUMBERS, PARTICULARLY  
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WHILE THE MEKONG RIVER REMAINS HIGH. THE NUMBER NEW HMONG ARRIVALS DROPPED RECENTLY, AND MAY CONTINUE TO DECLINE BECAUSE OF STEADY MILITARY PRESSURE AGAINST THEM IN LAOS. END SUMMARY.

2. UDORN CONSULATE REPORTED (REFTEL) THAT THE JULY ARRIVAL RATE FOR REFUGEES FROM LAOS IN NONGKHAI WAS

THE HIGHEST EVER WITH 2200 REFUGEES (1750 LAO AND 450 HMONG) ENTERING THE PROVINCE. THUS FAR, THE RTG HAS BEEN RESTRAINED IN ITS REACTION TO THIS CONTINUING SURGE OF THE REFUGEES ACROSS THE MEKONG RIVER.

3. WHILE THE NUMBER OF LAO HAS INCREASED, THERE HAS APPARENTLY BEEN SOME DROP-OFF IN THE ARRIVAL RATE OF HMONG REFUGEES. UNOFFICIAL CONSULATE UDORN STATISTICS SHOW THAT FROM MARCH THROUGH JUNE, THE HMONG WERE ARRIVING IN NONGKHAI AT RATES OF ABOUT 680 PER MONTH, BUT IN JUNE THIS FELL TO 520 AND IN JULY TO 450. THIS DECLINE IN HMONG ARRIVALS APPARENTLY AT LEAST PARTIALLY REFLECTS LDPR/SRV INTERDICTION EFFORTS DIRECTED AGAINST HMONG WHO ARE FLEEING THE PHU BIA AREA TO REACH AND THEN CROSS THE MEKONG RIVER. NEWLY ARRIVING HMONG REFUGEES TELL A TALE OF INCREASINGLY HEAVY MILITARY PRESSURE AGAINST THEM IN THEIR BASE AREAS. REFUGEES REPORT THAT LDPR/SRV FORCES ARE USING AIRCRAFT AGAINST THE HMONG, AND MAKING ARTILLERY AND GROUND ATTACKS ON HMONG SETTLEMENTS IN ADDITION TO CONTINUING TO SUPPRESS RESISTANCE ACTIVITY. REFUGEES ALSO REPORT THAT LDPR/SRV FORCES ARE PURSUING AND INTERDICTING REFUGEES ALONG ESCAPE ROUTES LEADING TOWARDS THE THAI BORDER. REFUGEES REPORT THAT WHEN LDPR/SRV FORCES CAPTURE HMONG REFUGEES, MALE REFUGEES ARE OFTEN ARRESTED AND LED AWAY OR KILLED. SOME OF THE NEW  
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REFUGEE ARRIVALS ESTIMATE THAT FEWER THAN 50 PERCENT OF THE REFUGEES SUCCEED IN REACHING THAILAND.

4. ALTHOUGH THE ABOVE IS BASED PRIMARILY ON REFUGEE ACCOUNTS, FOR SOME TIME A PICTURE HAS BEEN EMERGING OF EXTENSIVE MILITARY PRESSURE AGAINST THE HMONG BY LDPR AND SRV FORCES. JUDGMENTS VARY AS TO WHETHER THE LDPR OR SRV FORCES ARE TAKING THE LEAD IN ATTACKS AGAINST THE HMONG, BUT JUDGING FROM REFUGEE ACCOUNTS IT APPEARS CLEAR THAT SRV FORCES ARE INVOLVED. WE HOPE TO REPORT MORE EXTENSIVELY ON THIS SUBJECT AFTER FURTHER DEBRIEFINGS OF NEW ARRIVALS.

5. COMMENT: ETHNIC LAO REFUGEES FROM LAOS CONTINUE TO ARRIVE IN HEAVY NUMBERS. SECURITY HAS APPARENTLY NOT TIGHTENED RECENTLY FOR LOWLAND LAO ESCAPING TO THAILAND AND THE HIGH WATER IN THE RIVER APPARENTLY MAKES ESCAPE LESS OBVIOUS, ALTHOUGH THE SWIFT CURRENT IS HAZARDOUS. IF THE FLOW OF LAND REFUGEES CONTINUES AT PRESENT LEVELS, THERE MAY BE AN RTG REACTION OVER THE MONTHS TO COME. BY SEPTTEL WE ARE REPORTING ON OVER 600 KHMER REFUGEES WHO HAVE ARRIVED

DURING THE PAST THREE WEEKS IN TA PHRAYA DISTRICT OF  
PRACHINBURI PROVINCE. ABRAMOWITZ

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## Message Attributes

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**Concepts:** DATA, REFUGEES, PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS  
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